

Chapter Four – The Consequence

“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.””

I find it interesting that the Holy Spirit doesn't mention Adam and Eve having sexually intimate relations with each other until after they were driven out of paradise. From the previous chapter, we can see they didn't want to leave - they had to be driven out - but once they were out, that's when they started having children. This would indicate that their relationship, the closeness, the love they shared in Eden was not based upon a sexual intimacy. We've already seen just how intense that love was and the decision it led Adam to make. And I think we would do well to take note of that today. Now, some might say, “Ah, come on, how could they walk around naked and not be concerned with sex?” But remember, before the fall, they had no sin to influence their thoughts. They probably had a very different outlook in this regard.

With so much contemporary emphasis on the sexual relationship, we must understand that sex, as wonderful as it is, is not the essence of love.

It's also neat to realize that paradise and the presence of God was so beautiful, so fulfilling - imagine taking daily walks with the Lord! - that they apparently just didn't need to emphasize their own sexual relationship. Now God said, *“Be fruitful and multiply.”* so we know it's a glorious part of His plan, but it just doesn't seem to have been a notable factor in the couple's relationship while in Eden. As such, this is a type of the true paradise for heaven will be the same way. See Mk 12:18-25.

The name Cain means to acquire or possess and can imply a thought like, “here it is” or “I've got him”. One reason that's relevant is because they had just gone from a situation where they needed nothing to a situation where they needed everything. And one of the most difficult things for parents to handle is that our kids are not our possessions - they belong to the Lord. They're on loan to us so to speak. In this

sinful insecure world, one of the most dear things we can know is the unconditional love of a child. Most of us would not trade it for anything. Nevertheless, it's not something to be possessed, to own, but rather it's something to nurture, enjoy, and share.

Many excellent Bible scholars say that this name indicates Eve may have thought Cain was the fulfillment of what God promised in Gen 3:15 - the Messiah. If that was the case, what a incredible trial it must have been for these two parents to see the one who they'd thought to be Messiah turn out to be a killer. But that's exactly what will happen during the last years of this present age when the Jewish people and indeed the whole world will look to a man the Bible calls Antichrist and they will think he is the Messiah. He will turn out, however to be the son of the devil and a fiendish destroyer.

“Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

The name Abel means 'breath' or 'nothing'. Perhaps, by comparison to Cain in stature or cleverness, he

was nothing to write home about. Perhaps, there was more relationship between Adam and Cain than with Adam and Abel. We note that it was Cain who followed in his dad's footsteps in becoming a tiller of the ground.

As we will see soon, Cain's efforts to please God represent the essence of vain religion, whereas Abel's approach is a picture and a foreshadowing of those with a true relationship with God (that is, one based on faith). And at this point, we should mention that Eve who can be seen to symbolize all believers, gave birth to both.

“And in the process of time (or literally “at the end of days”) it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.”

Now, neither offering was in and of itself good or bad. Some say that Abel's offering was acceptable because it was a picture of the Lamb of God - Christ, and I believe that is so, but we must remember

that these weren't sin offerings per se. The Law had not been given yet and even when it was, a grain offering was also specified. (See Lev 2) So why was one offering acceptable to God and the other not?

The writer of Hebrews answers this when he says, *"By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."* Heb 11:4

God knew the heart of these two. Abel offered a sacrifice of faith, and we know that *"faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"* Rom 10:17. So they obviously had gotten the word - offer this bloody sacrifice - and Abel believed that it would please God.

It is only through faith in God, in His Word that speaks of His own bloody sacrifice - Jesus Christ - that makes one righteous. Cain, on the other hand, decided to do it his own way. He decided to try to impress God with his own works, and this pictures the insistence of those who work to earn their salvation rather

than obey God and come to His saving grace in humbly faith.

In fact, "at the end of days", that is, the last days or the time known in the scripture as the great tribulation and the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7) we will again see the satanic force of false religion raise its hand against the true believers - more on that in a moment.

Cain's vain religion, like all false religions was based upon three things: human schemes, human sacrifice and human satisfaction. He probably had reason to approach God in this way because God had instructed Adam to be a tiller of the ground. But this command or preceding 'law' from the Lord for work was adjusted when it came to acceptable worship.

You could say that Abel 'got it' whereas Cain continued vainly in following the former or old rules. True 'religion', on the contrary, is based upon the Word of God, the work of Jesus Christ, and the witness of His Holy Spirit.

Now, the Hebrew word for 'respect' here means literally to

gaze at, to inspect or to consider. And so, it appears that God wouldn't give His attention to what Cain brought.

Nothing will anger a religious person quicker than to tell him that all his religious good works, apart from faith, are worthless in earning God's respect.

"And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell."

Cain's religious piety was a sham. Speaking of shams, Kent Hughes tells the story, *"A number of years ago, when I was a youth pastor, word came to me from one of the large churches in my area that the last living member of the Bonnie and Clyde gang, Big Jim Harrington, had been giving his testimony to standing-room-only crowds with amazing results. So I made the arrangements for him to speak at our church. I arranged for special music, had several thousand handbills printed and distributed at the local high schools, and enlisted counselors. The night arrived, and it went beyond our expectations -- a sea of teenagers."*

"Big Jim was unbelievable -- an imposing man about eighty years

old with tattoos on the back of his hands and an indentation atop his bald head from an old bullet wound. For two hours he regaled us with powerful stories of his wasted life with Clyde Barrow. He poignantly exhorted us not to waste our youth and urged us to commit our lives to Christ. Everyone was thrilled. The elders who had been reticent congratulated us on the service. I was very satisfied and a little smug -- until two days later when I received a call from Big Jim's agent, who told me he had just learned that Big Jim was an impostor, that in fact he was a well-meaning alcoholic who lived with his daughter out in the desert and suffered delusions about his uneventful past. Gulp!" (Kent Hughes)

At this point, a darkness overtook Cain. His face fell and the ugliness of his self-righteous heart attitude was exposed.

"So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door, and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

In the original language, the picture here is of sin, like a preying lion, crouching and ready to pounce upon its victim. Nevertheless, God says, “*but you should rule over it.*” and the emphasis is rightly placed upon “should” for Cain along with all who have not been born again in Christ lack the freedom from sin’s mastery. The Word tells us, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” Rom 3:23 and *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”* Jn 8:34

The Good News is that when we are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ, we are free not to sin. Of course, we can still choose to sin but we are no longer slaves to it. If Cain had only talked with God and confessed his sin... but instead...

“Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”

You see, Cain’s sin here began with his anger and he simply acted it out to its natural conclusion. That’s why Jesus said when you’re angry

with your brother...look out. (Mat 5:21,22)

“Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”

Again, the Lord offered an opportunity for repentance. But Cain was absolutely without remorse.

“He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

‘Keeper’ means to put a hedge about, to protect. Cain revealed the true ugliness of his heart in this saying. Not only did he premeditate and carry out this murder, but his conscience was seared with hatred. The famous French philosopher Voltaire who cursed Christ and boasted, “*In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear.*” when he died, he cried out in desperation, “*I am abandoned by God and man! I give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!*”(Hughes)

In contrast, the moment of death also sometimes reveals spiritual beauty. John Wesley died full of counsel, exhortations, and praise for God. His final words were, “*The best of all is God is with us. The best of all is God is with us. The best of all is God is with us. Farewell!*”

Jonathon Edwards, dying from smallpox, gave some final directions, bid his daughter goodbye, and expired saying, “*Where is Jesus, my never-failing friend?*”(Hughes)

What a difference in attitude!

“And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

We cannot pass over this quickly. It’s just so profound. Here is revealed a beautiful aspect of our God’s character. As holy and just, He issued a judgment upon Cain, but note the judgment. This is not “*eye for an eye and tooth for a*

tooth”. That’s part of the Mosaic law that came later. Here, was God’s personal judgment upon an individual apart from the law. In it, we should note that the judgment was based upon the individual’s awareness of God’s commands. That is, the judgment was linked to the knowledge of what God expected, desired or said.

For Cain, this went back to the previous verses where it was clear that offering the fruit of the ground to God was not acceptable. Abel heeded the word to offer the bloody sacrifice and obeyed by faith. Cain insisted upon his own way and was reproved. Afterwards, being stiff-necked in his rebellion and hatred, he polluted the very ground from which he wanted to bring fruit to please God. His violence contaminated the very thing he wanted to use in worship.

And that’s always the way it is with the things we rebelliously run after - we pollute them, our sinful attitude ruins them, whether it’s people, places or things.

Now, no mention had yet been made by God that it was wrong to kill, though undoubtedly, the

conscience of Cain cried guilty. The only rules so to speak at this point involved the appropriate uses of the ground and worship, so the punishment also dealt with the ground and Cain's relationship to it. God did not require Cain's life but to the contrary, He protected it. So what's the point? The point is that God's judgments are always fair and just.

Now, God is sovereign, and we have no place in saying God should judge this way or that. His thoughts are infinitely higher than ours (Isa 55). But the Bible does say that when we get to heaven and observe God's judgments, folks will be singing, "*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*" Rev 15:3 Cain was judged according to what he knew. Ignorance was a factor.

Now the neat thing about this is that it helps me understand how Paul can assert that "...all Israel will be saved." Rom 11:26,27 Of course, with this we're looking primarily at the unbreakable promise of God, but God's promise has to be reconciled with His Holiness and righteous judgment as

well. You see, Paul also explained that "blindness" was placed upon Israel (Rom 11:7,8) so they have been kept in the dark, in a matter of speaking. This was in order that the Gentile church could come into the kingdom. Now, how this all works out in the eternal realm, I don't know. But I do know that God's judgment will be universally declared just - and not simply because people feel like they have to say that - remember, there's no lying in heaven, no sin at all. Everyone will honestly be totally impressed with how God judges everyone and everything.

"And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

"One of the consequences of sin is that it makes the sinner pity himself instead of causing him to turn to God. One of the first signs of new life is that the individual takes sides with God against himself." (Barnhouse)

The words for 'fugitive' and 'vagabond' are both primary root words in the Hebrew which mean to waver. Cain was saying, "*I'll have no roots, no place to call home.*"

His rebellion continued when he built a city to settle in defying God's command to stay on the road so to speak. Perhaps it was to surround himself with people sympathetic to him - generally, people who are like-minded tend to come together anyway. You see, Cain was afraid of others who would avenge Abel's death. That is, the other brothers and cousins and nephews etc. He feared that he would reap what he had sown.

"And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him."

This should dispel the notion that when you commit sin, God's looking to get even with you. There are so many who feel this way about the Lord. They know their lives have been sinful and they look at God as an avenger. They miss the concept of God's grace and forgiveness; they fail to understand the

unbalanced love of God. Sin brings its own consequences. Now, like gravity, certain laws of physical existence are set in place. One of those laws is, "*Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*" Gal 6:7 But in demonstration of His love for Cain, God intervened and placed a distinguishing mark upon Cain to preserve him from the natural consequences of his sin.

In this passage, Cain can be seen as representative of those who reject the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ and persecute true believers. Those who follow in the footsteps of Cain have a twisted perspective of God and alienate themselves from Him. In these last days, they will also receive a mark but it won't come from God. Rather they will be marked by Antichrist. And instead of a protection from murder, it will be a guarantee of eternal damnation. We see this described in the book of Revelation:

"Then I (John the Revelator) saw another beast coming up out of the earth (possibly Israel), and he had two horns like a lamb (possibly pretending to be a Christian) and spoke like a dragon...And he deceives those who dwell on the

earth ... and he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” Rev 13:11-18

But while these rebellious people reject the sacrifice of God’s Son, the true Lamb, and reap the wages of their sin, the Lord will demonstrate His mercy by putting His own mark on those who look to Him thereby protecting them from the judgments He pours out on a Christ-rejecting sin filled world.

“Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son -- Enoch.”

‘Enoch’ means ‘dedicated’ which is appropriate for the picture. You see, false religions have throughout history demonstrated perverse dedication whether in the sacrifice

of their own children upon the red hot arms of the god Molech or in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasure or in the suicide bombings of an unholy jihad or in the sale of papal indulgences or in the wearing of ‘holy’ underwear or in the distribution of magazines door to door -- on and on it goes. Those duped by Satan can be very devoted.

“To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. Then Lamech took for himself two wives; the name of one was Adah and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother’s name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.”

As with all studies of pictures and symbols, we must be careful not to extrapolate them too far. They are pictures that provide potential

insight to the antitypes or fulfillments of the types.

“Then Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.””

What I think we’re intended to glean from this short passage the trend of sin. Despite the apparent “progress” of humanity - learning how to make articles of bronze and iron, developing music and culture, we find the indication of an escalation in violence, pride, and lust.

Lamech was not content with forgiving the hurt that was done to him or even to return it equally but he had to kill the one who wounded him; he was not content with being avenged only seven fold. He was not content with one wife. Sin propelled Lamech and the whole pre-diluvian world into a downward spiral of self-destruction and Satan was fanning the flame.

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” As a consequence, “...the earth” was “filled with violence.” (Gen 6:5.13)

The relevance to today is that we see the same thing happening. Knowledge is increasing at a phenomenal rate just as Daniel prophesied would happen in the last days. (Dan 12:4) Some ninety percent of all the scientists that ever lived are alive today. In many areas of study, man’s cumulative knowledge is doubling each year. He’s developing all sorts of new possessions trying to fill the void and meaninglessness in his wicked heart.

Man thinks he is becoming more cultured, that he’s evolving when in fact he’s butchering himself and devoluting in the same pattern as humanity did before the great flood. His mind is increasingly filled with the most perverted violence, lust and with powerful pride. Jesus said, “... as the days of Noah were, (that is, before the flood) so also will the coming of the Son Man be.” (that is, when Christ comes again) (Mat 24:37)

“And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named

him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.” And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.”

The forces of evil cannot ultimately win. Though they strike out and try to silence the righteous, God simply raises up another. Seth was not necessarily the next child born to Adam and Eve, but they did recognize him as being the “appointed” seed (that’s what the name Seth means). That is, they acknowledged that the promise of God would be fulfilled through his line. Cain had disqualified himself, Abel was martyred, and now God proved his faithfulness by bringing about a new birth, a new man.

‘Enosh’ means ‘mortal’. This implies that finally man understood he was doomed to die physically. And it’s at this time that man began to “*call on the name of the Lord*”. The word “call” is not a pious, reverent whisper but a loud desperate shout. It’s when we REALLY know we REALLY need God that we call out in this way. Some men were finally ‘getting it’, understanding that they were

dependent upon God, facing the fact of death and looking to God for help. Without God’s intervention, without His mercy and grace, man had no chance of regaining eternal life.

Dr. H. A. Ironside said that when his father died, this passage was running through his father’s mind, and he kept repeating, “*A great sheet and wild beasts, and...and...and...*” (referring to the Apostle Peter’s vision of Acts 10:12) When he could not get the words out, he started over but stalled once more at the same place. Finally a friend bent over and whispered, “*John, it says, ‘creeping things.’”* “*Oh yes,*” he said, “*that is how I got in. Just a poor, good-for-nothing creeping thing, but I got in.*”

God’s grace and mercy at work.